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Letter dated 15 October 2010 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to convey the attached communication dated 11 October 2010, which I have received from the Deputy Secretary General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, Claudio Bisogniero, transmitting the quarterly report on the operations of the International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan, covering the period from 1 May to 31 July 2010 (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would bring the present letter and its annex to the attention of the members of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) **BAN** Ki-moon

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Please recycle

Annex

Letter dated 11 October 2010 from the Deputy Secretary General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization addressed to the Secretary-General

In accordance with Security Council resolutions 1386 (2001) and 1510 (2003), I attach a report on the operations of the International Security Assistance Force covering the period from May to July 2010. I would appreciate your making this report available to the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Claudio **Bisogniero**

Enclosure

Quarterly report to the Security Council on the operations of the International Security Assistance Force

Introduction

1. The present report, pursuant to the obligation under Security Council resolution 1890 (2009) to report to the United Nations on the progress of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), covers the period from 1 May to 31 July 2010. As at 1 August 2010, total ISAF strength stood at 119,819 personnel from 28 NATO countries and 19 non-NATO countries, which includes participation by 2 new countries during the quarter.

2. Throughout the reporting period, ISAF has continued to assist the Government of Afghanistan in accordance with relevant Security Council resolutions. From 1 May to 31 July 2010, ISAF suffered 2,168 casualties including 205 killed in action, 1,943 wounded in action and 20 non-battle-related deaths.

3. Efforts to train and mentor the various entities within the Government of Afghanistan continue. This has expanded to roles where ISAF has not formerly been involved, including the various organizations of the army and police. The recent increase in support structures and mentorship requirements has seen a commensurate increase in offers from some countries, but gaps still remain. It is vital that the international community consider what potential resources and manpower can be offered in order to continue to develop Afghan security, governance and development capabilities. Key issues of the reporting period include:

(a) NATO/ISAF continued to recognize the importance of an explicit link between governance, security and development. Without successful and continued strength in all three, gains in any area are likely to be unsustainable. Continued anti-corruption efforts and an increase in civilian personnel, engagement and efforts are necessary to advance these issues;

(b) The Kabul Conference constituted a significant milestone towards full "Afghanization". At the Conference, which launched the "Kabul process", the Joint Framework for Inteqal was endorsed with an affirmation of a conditions-based approach. The Government of Afghanistan and NATO/ISAF will jointly assess what provinces/capabilities meet the necessary conditions for Inteqal. As such, the process does not represent a redeployment of forces out of Afghanistan, but will allow international forces to move into a supportive role. International community support in the domain of governance and development efforts are crucial to achieve a successful transition;

(c) The Afghan National Security Forces have been growing in quantity, although the quality of the forces still needs to be improved. It is essential that the international community continue to provide trainers and mentors to develop Afghan National Security Forces capability in order to transition towards Afghan-led security;

(d) Although ISAF has increased its troop strength and operations, there has been a significant reduction in the number of civilian casualties caused by ISAF due

to strict adherence to the tactical directive of the Commander of ISAF. In turn, the number of civilian casualties caused by insurgents has risen dramatically.

Security situation

4. The insurgency in Afghanistan remains a decentralized, resilient force, that continuously adapts its tactics and techniques in order to counter and oppose the increased ISAF presence, the build-up of the Afghan National Security Forces, development projects and the upcoming parliamentary elections. Insurgents tend to avoid direct confrontations with large ISAF and Afghan National Security Forces elements. The number of incidents continues to rise, and improvised explosive device strikes and coordinated attacks remain the preferred method of operations of the insurgents. Insurgents also continue in their efforts to intimidate the local population, exploiting events through their propaganda and creating the perception of an expanding insurgency with a deteriorating security situation. ISAF progress across the country is fairly steady. It will take time before effective "hold" and "build" operations, combined with sustained governance, result in enduring stability. In some areas, the local populace has remained anxious to see if the Government could meet their expectations. In other areas, progress has resulted in an active resistance of the population against the insurgents.

5. Regionally, the security situation is as follows:

(a) *Regional Command Capital*. Afghan National Security Forces continue to be in the lead in Kabul City and Province, and there was a decreasing trend in insurgent activity during the quarter. Only one insurgency attack on a target of opportunity resulted in casualties to ISAF in Kabul City. Preparations for the National Consultative Peace Jirga and the Kabul Conference gave the Afghan National Security Forces and ISAF the opportunity to disrupt Taliban and Haqqani network plans and consequently reduce their capacity in this Regional Command. Consequently, contrary to the prevalent concerns, minimal insurgent disruption and a relatively secure atmosphere were seen during the Kabul Conference, and this should be counted as a success on the part of the Afghan National Security Forces and ISAF;

(b) *Regional Command North*. Kunduz and Baghlan Provinces remain the most affected areas in the region. With additional international troops deployed and increased operational tempo in Regional Command North, the insurgents have scattered to other areas across the region. Insurgents appear to be moving a portion of their capability from attacking the security forces to committing violent acts against civilians;

(c) *Regional Command West*. The main contested areas were Badghis and Farah, where improvements in the security situation await improvements in governance and an increased presence of security forces;

(d) *Regional Command South* and *Regional Command Southwest* (in June 2010, the former Regional Command South was divided into Regional Command South and Southwest). Southern Afghanistan remained the heart of the Taliban insurgency. Insurgency operations continued despite severe losses. In some areas, the high threat level continued to hamper reconstruction and development projects;

(e) *Regional Command East*. Eastern Afghanistan remained the second focal region for insurgent activities. The threat in Kunar, Khost and Nangarhar Provinces

was high and will remain so as long as the insurgents continue to use the border region of Afghanistan and Pakistan as a safe haven.

6. Improvised explosive device attacks remained the main cause of casualties among ISAF, Afghan National Security Forces and Afghan civilians. A total of 1,551 detonations occurred during the reporting period, while 1,591 devices were discovered and disposed of, representing 51 per cent of all improvised explosive device events.[1]

Afghan National Security Forces

7. According to the qualitative assessment survey on Afghan perceptions and attitudes released at the end of the reporting period, the confidence of the people of Afghanistan in the capabilities of the Afghan National Security Forces has remained strong (about 80 per cent). However, in order to maintain this level of perception, the Ministers for Defence and of the Interior and the NATO Training Mission Afghanistan have been working together to develop better leadership, an improved Afghan National Security Forces communications strategy and greater transparency.

8. General Bismillah Khan Mohammadi (formerly the Chief of the General Staff) was sworn in as new Interior Minister by President Karzai on 30 June 2010. The Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry of Defence have continued to receive mentoring assistance from the NATO Training Mission Afghanistan. Like the Ministry of Defence, the Ministry of the Interior has planned legislation for the Inherent Law for Officers and Non-Commissioned Officers to better professionalize the police career structure.

9. The development of capable, professional and autonomous Afghan National Security Forces remained the main priority for the ISAF mission.

Afghan National Army

10. Although it still relies on ISAF support as it fights and trains, Afghan National Army growth had already exceeded its October 2010 target of 134,000, by the end of July 2010. Better recruiting methods and pay have been key factors in this success and a high retention rate remains key to its growth and professionalization. The Inherent Law for Officers and Non-Commissioned Officers passed in July 2010 by the Afghan Parliament was also welcome, as it contains a pension provision for officers and soldiers. Once implemented, this measure will offer better career prospects for the Afghan National Army.

11. Mentoring and partnering of fielded Afghan National Army units grew during the quarter. At the end of June 2010, approximately 95 per cent of fielded Afghan National Army units were partnered and mentored by ISAF troops. Given the growth targets of the Afghan National Army for October 2011 (171,600), the NATO Training Mission Afghanistan has been increasing its output of newly trained recruits, concentrating on training future key military leaders (officers and non-commissioned officers) and designing courses to reduce illiteracy rates within the army.

[1] An improvised explosive device event for the purposes of this report is defined as a detonation, discovery, turn-in by local nationals or pre-detonation.

Afghan Air Force

12. The Afghan National Army Air Corps changed its name to the Afghan Air Force during the reporting period. Its overall strength continues to rise, surpassing 3,500, but is still behind the planned numbers. The main manning challenges include English language training and difficulties in attracting enough literate recruits. Nevertheless, the Afghan Air Force offered contributions in battlefield air mobility, casualty evacuation and the provision of assistance to the civilian population in times of flooding and other natural disasters. In addition, the capabilities of the C-27 transport fleet have continued to grow, providing much needed additional capacity to the intra-theatre airlift system.

Afghan National Police

13. Positive Afghan perceptions of the Afghan National Police rose slightly in the quarter. The Afghan National Police has relied on ISAF and the NATO Training Mission Afghanistan for support, and its development and professionalization remain behind that of the Afghan National Army. It receives prioritized assistance from the NATO Training Mission Afghanistan and ISAF.

14. The quarter saw sustained Afghan National Police growth in excess of targets and it is assessed that it will exceed the objective of 109,000 by 31 October 2010. However, the high attrition rate remained high, particularly for the Afghan National Civil Order Police. In order to achieve the October 2011 growth objective of 134,000, an expansion of the training base over the next 18 months is planned. Like the Afghan National Army, the Afghan National Police needs to professionalize the force, particularly with respect to leadership development. An intensive literacy pilot programme has been started to address the challenge of illiteracy, providing basic reading, writing and math skills to improve the ability of the Afghan National Police to speak, read and write Dari or Pashto. Continued international support for the pilot programme will also help the Afghan National Police to attract and retain qualified personnel.

15. In the field, the Afghan National Police has relied on ISAF for partnering and mentoring. Currently, more than 83 per cent of the Afghan National Police units in key districts are partnered. However, the overall national fill rate for partnering the Afghan National Police is lower, affecting its ability to increase its professionalism.

Civilian casualties

16. ISAF has been making every effort to reduce the impact of the conflict on civilians. The Commander of ISAF released the revised tactical directive in August 2010 to re-emphasize the need to protect the Afghan population and reduce the number of civilian casualties. However, when combat-related civilian casualties or damage to civilian property occur, NATO/ISAF considers that easing civilian suffering is of tremendous importance. For this reason, in June 2010, NATO/ISAF agreed on a set of non-binding policy guidelines for dealing with cases of civilian combat-related casualties. Decisions on making payments in cases of civilian combat-related casualties or damage remain a matter of national discretion. The non-binding guidelines are not intended to alter the legal position and obligations of individual national ISAF forces in Afghanistan, and payments are not an admission of legal liability or fault.

17. ISAF has remained committed to reducing civilian casualties and the ISAF escalation of force standard operation procedures were revised in April 2010. This continued effort has resulted in a nearly 60 per cent decrease of the confirmed civilian casualties caused by ISAF when compared to the previous quarter.

18. Insurgent action has continued to cause the preponderance of civilian casualties. It has been confirmed by the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) in its 2010 midyear report on protection of civilians in armed conflict, that more than 70 per cent of civilian deaths and more than 75 per cent of civilians wounded are the direct result of insurgent activities. These percentages are suspected to be even higher since the responsible party is not determined in approximately 16 per cent of all events.

Governance

19. In addition to marking a new phase in the partnership between the Government of Afghanistan and the international community towards full Afghan ownership, the Kabul Conference re-emphasized the explicit linkage between development, governance and security, as outlined at the London Conference in January 2010. NATO and ISAF have repeatedly stated that if the mission in Afghanistan is to be successful, the ability of the Government to govern must be supported, which will require sustained international community assistance through a more resourced civilian effort. The Afghan National Development Strategy Governance Cluster endorsed at the Kabul Conference is a welcome development in that context, given the importance of governance in engendering enduring results across Afghanistan. As corruption continues to be an issue, an all-Government effort to tackle the key drivers of the issue will be required.

20. The Kabul Conference endorsed the Inteqal document coordinated between the Government of Afghanistan and NATO/ISAF, which includes a conditions-based approach towards full Afghan assumption of responsibility for security nationwide. It is critically important that the provincial reconstruction teams gradually evolve towards more civilianized structures as foreseen in the Joint Framework for Inteqal with a view to adequately supporting "Afghanization".

21. ISAF security advisory efforts in support of preparations for the parliamentary elections were purposefully less overt, demonstrating an Afghan-led, transparent and legitimate process. However, throughout the reporting period ISAF continued to support the Afghan election preparation efforts through offers of intelligence and "overwatch" capacity.